

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Hurricane mayor objects to MCHM CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Hurricane Mayor Scott Edwards said he learned Wednesday that thousands of gallons of contaminated wastewater from Freedom Industries are being dumped at Disposal Services Inc., a landfill on W.Va. 34 in Hurricane. He found out after residents along the road, and nearby U.S. 60, started complaining about a licorice smell near their homes. "So far they've dumped about 35,000 gallons of MCHM water into the Hurricane landfill," Edwards said. "People were smelling licorice up and down Route 60 and Route 34 in Hurricane." The state Department of Environmental Protection responded to several odor complaints on Wednesday and determined the licorice odor was caused by the water being brought to the landfill. Waste Management owns the landfill, where they've been dumping the water since March 7. Edwards said the city was not notified of the agreement. WM has been adding sawdust to the water to solidify it in order to try to prevent it from seeping into the ground, but Edwards said the city has already filed a lawsuit and an injunction. "Hurricane wasn't tainted in the original spill, and now everyone is smelling licorice out on Route 34 and Route 60," Edwards said. An initial "test load" of contaminated water was delivered to the landfill on Feb. 24, DEP spokesman Tom Aluisse said. The landfill's permit says it can accept wastewater through October. "They're just trucking it in here and dumping it," Edwards said. "We've been getting complaints -- 911 was called yesterday, because there's a preschool ... and people were taking their kids home because the smell was so overpowering."

Sheriff revokes gun permit of Freedom cleanup company owner CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The Kanawha County Sheriff's Department has revoked the concealed weapons permit of the man whose company has been cleaning up Freedom Industries' tank farm on the Elk River. Daniel Kessler, who owns Diversified Services, the cleanup company, had his permit revoked on Wednesday after the Sheriff's Department read a Gazette article that said he was sentenced to a spousal abuse program after a 1995 assault conviction in Maryland. "After reading your article we contacted authorities in Maryland and asked for more information," Cpl. Brian Humphreys, Sheriff's Department spokesman, told the Gazette. Humphreys said the Sheriff's Department first issued the weapons permit in 2011, and it was re-issued in 2013 when Kessler changed his address. "In 2011, they didn't have any information that he went to a spousal abuse program and that the initial underlying charges were domestic violence," Humphreys said. In 1995, Kessler pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault and battery in Annapolis, Md. In return, prosecutors dropped four other charges, including assault with intent to murder and reckless endangerment. Kessler was sentenced to six months in jail, five years probation and was ordered to complete a spousal abuse program, according to Maryland court records. "We're basing that off of the spousal abuse program," Humphreys said of the decision to revoke the permit. "It's enough for the sheriff to make the decision."

MCHM a cloud over state basketball tourney CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A chemical leak that tainted the tap water of 300,000 West Virginians two months ago continues to concern people far outside the leak area who are confronting their own worries about Charleston's water as they visit the capital this week for the state's high school girls basketball tournament. Some athletes and others at the four-day tournament said they came to Charleston anxious about taking showers and drinking tap water. After reading about the city's water issues since the Jan. 9 leak of the coal-cleaning chemical Crude MCHM, some people arriving from outside the leak zone opted for bottled, instead of tap water, at area hotels and restaurants. Many even brought their

own bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth. Others, though, believe the problem is well in the past and said they prefer to focus on the moment -- winning a championship. "We're not concerned about the water," said St. Marys coach Howard Meeks.